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## NEWS RELEASE

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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### **FORMER NAVY ENLISTED MAN SENTENCED TO 121- MONTH PRISON TERM FOR RECEIVING CHILD PORNOGRAPHY**

FRESNO - United States Attorney McGregor W. Scott announced today that ERIK ALAN PETERSEN, 22 of Lemoore, California was sentenced by the Honorable Oliver W. Wanger for his conviction of one count of receiving visual depictions of the sexual exploitation of minors. The sentence included a federal prison term of 121 months to be followed by a period of supervised release of 120 months.

The case was the result of an investigation by the Lemoore, California Police Department and the Fresno Office of United States Immigration and Customs Enforcement with assistance from the Navy Criminal Investigation Service, the Kings County District Attorney's Office, and the Fresno County Sheriff's Department as part of Project Safe Childhood. Project Safe Childhood was launched to increase federal prosecutions of sexual predators of children, and to reduce the number of Internet crimes against children including child pornography trafficking. As a part of PSC, the United States Attorney's Office has teamed with state and local agencies and organizations to increase law enforcement presence on the Internet, and to educate the public about safe Internet use, thereby reducing the risk that children might fall prey to online sexual predators. For additional information on the PSC initiative, please go to [www.projectsafekidhood.gov](http://www.projectsafekidhood.gov) or call the United States Attorney's Office for the Eastern District of California and ask to speak with the PSC coordinator.

According to Assistant United States Attorney David Gappa, who prosecuted the case, PETERSEN admitted in a plea agreement that from approximately April 9, 2005, through December 6, 2006, he used a computer and modem to receive, by use of the Internet, visual depictions of the sexual exploitation of minors. The offense involved material depicting prepubescent minors as well as images of minors engaged in sadistic or masochistic conduct or other violence. The defendant admitted that he received and possessed more than 600 images of the sexual exploitation of minors on computer hard drives, compact discs, or other storage devices. Two of the images were of a minor female with whom Petersen had had a personal relationship that began before he enlisted in the Navy.

PETERSEN was serving on active duty at the Naval Air Station in Lemoore, California at the time of his arrest on February 15, 2007. In choosing a term of imprisonment at the high end of the relevant sentencing range, the judge stated that the case was "tragic" given the history of military service by the defendant and his family. But because of the "heinous" nature of the offense that the defendant

committed, he needed to be held accountable for his conduct with a lengthy prison sentence and period of supervised release.

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